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THE PASADENA WEEKLY IS THE ONLY PAPER YOU WILL ACTUALLY READ

# pasadena WEEKLY

## DEARTH DAY

Where have all the



**ELECT THIS!**

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Dah winnahs, dah losaahs

**INTERCEPTED PAST**

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Theresa Moreau on remembering

**SHIRLEE SMITH**

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Schools are caught in parent trap

**S**itting in the third floor office of the Spirit of the Sage Council on North Raymond Avenue in Old Pasadena, Elizabeth Francis reflected on the real meaning of Earth Day.

This year's Earth Day celebration in Pasadena has been extended to Earth Week, with a special proclamation to that effect being made by Mayor Chris Holden on the steps of City Hall Monday afternoon. That informal event will be followed by a celebrity fund-raiser for the Sage Council today at Q's Billiards Club on Colorado Boulevard.

But gone this year, are the festivals and public tree plantings. This year, those events seem to have been replaced by such things as a big-money benefit, staged mainly to help pay for legal expenses incurred by the Sage Council in fighting environmental causes in court.

The tree plantings, once a public affair with hundreds of saplings being planted around the Arroyo Seco, are now largely private events, with one on tap for Thursday featuring a visit by Gov. Gray Davis.

Davis is expected to unveil his Urban Forestry Initiative, a plan to pump \$3.1 million into efforts to plant two million trees in cities around the state by the turn of the century, said Leslie Mylius of the Beverly Hills-based TreePeople, sponsors of the ceremony at Longfellow Elementary School on East Washington Boulevard (for more information on that event, see School Zone, page 8).

Francis, a 37-year resident of Altadena

who lives near Hahamongna Watershed Park, a city-owned parcel near Jet Propulsion Laboratory that has been in the planning stages for nearly a decade and the target of community-wide concern and criticism, isn't interested as much in having fun this week as she is in maintaining her perspective on the state of the planet as civilization heads into the new millennium.

"As far as I am concerned, the earth was created by God. He put everything on it. He gave man dominion over the earth, but I think we have turned it into domination," said the diminutive and easygoing Francis, who frequently addresses the Pasadena City Council on her concerns about development of Hahamongna, a Shoshone Indian word that means "fruitful valley, flowing waters."

In reality, the site is the only reasonable facsimile to wild open space left in Pasadena. It is the subject of intense debate between those who want to leave it that way, such as Francis and her neighbors, and others, namely city officials, who want to convert the property for recreational uses.

"The children have no place to go to enjoy nature," she said. "We have very little open space for anyone to enjoy and I think Earth Day should be to invite the people to come back to the earth."

#### EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

Earth Day, as we know it, started in San Francisco in 1970 with a proclamation much like the one issued by Holden earlier this week.

Back then, John McConnell, who had already devised such programs as "The Minute for Peace Program" and designed the Earth Flag, inspired by the first photo of the earth that appeared in Life Magazine,

## Legislative advocacy, litigation has replaced traditional Earth Day activities



MICHAEL GERMANA / PASADENA WEEKLY

On Monday, Pasadena Mayor Chris Holden presented a commendation to Elizabeth Francis from the Spirit of the Sage Council during an Earth Day celebration at City Hall. At her right is Vera Rocha, chief of the Gabriellino Shoshone Nation.

had no trouble in persuading the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to create the first Earth Day nearly 30 years ago.

A native of Iowa, McConnell's concern about the environment grew in the 1930s, when he owned a plastics plant in Los Angeles. In the 1950s, McConnell's interests turned to newspapers and he published a small weekly paper in North Carolina. A few years later, McConnell and his partner moved to Northern California where they published "Mountain View." An editorial he had written on joint space ventures with the former Soviet Union was circulated in the White House and later came to be during the Nixon Administration.

Much as Francis' observance of Earth day has a religious underpinning, most everything McConnell did was in the name of prayer and peace.

Leaned on for advice by heads of state and ecologists alike, McConnell's ideas of peace and environmental equilibrium were embraced by many world leaders. In 1995, at the age of 80, McConnell wrote the Earth Magna Charta.

It reads: "Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics, and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure."

In Pasadena since the writing of those words, celebrations of the earth have been, for the most part, peaceful. But they were also kind of messy for the people who had to clean up afterward.

#### DANCE THIS MESS AROUND

Pasadenans have always been sensitive to the environment. Likewise, they also like a good party. Many ecological groups, such

as the Spirit of the Sage Council, the John Muir Project, named for Pasadena's native son turn-of-the-century naturalist, and the National Endangered Species Network, make their homes here. In fact, the three organizations are housed in the same building at 30 N. Raymond Ave.

Seven years ago, however, things were not as well-organized, or geared to influencing legislation and filing lawsuits, as they are today.

In fact, in those days, recalled city Public Affairs Officer Ann Erdman of one such festival along the banks of the Arroyo, "there were literally thousands of people," who attended, listened to music, bought T-shirts and buttons, drank sodas and ate popcorn and hot dogs.

"When the day was done, there was the largest heap of trash in one place I had ever seen in my life. It was unbelievable," Erdman said. "And the irony struck me that on Earth Day, when people are supposed to be so conscious of their environment, they were just trashing the Arroyo."

A lot has changed since then. For one thing, the festival in the Arroyo was discontinued a few years after that. Another change was the switch by many groups from litigating to entertaining. Others have taken another approach.

Tom Kostin, director of the Lightbringer Project, and a member of the Arroyo Seco Foundation, said nonprofit Community Vision Unlimited will be sponsoring the planting of six oak trees at Washington School today.

Kostin said he hopes to combine some poetry readings with the tree plantings, in keeping with the Lightbringer's artistic mission to help deepen the understanding of the children.

"It's nothing of any major importance," Kostin said modestly. "There are no bells, no 'rockin', just a sweet poetic event."

Any poetic significance at the TreePeople's planting at Longfellow, where kids will get a chance to plant 50 trees, may be lost with its added political significance, said Mylius.

Along with the governor, Holden will be on hand for that event, as well, Councilman Paul Little, city fire and police officials and members of Pasadena Beautiful, she said.

As important as all that is, Mylius acknowledged there doesn't seem to be as much happening locally as in years past.

"Hopefully that will change next year, when it will be the 30th anniversary (of Earth Day)," she said. "We're hoping to change that."

#### FRUITFUL VALLEY?

There was something ironic about Holden's presence at Monday's ceremony at City Hall. He and the other council members may soon find themselves the targets of the Sage Council's environmental legal fire over the development of Hahamongna, said Leona Klippstein, Sage Council executive director.

Joining Klippstein at the City Hall meeting were members of the John Muir Project, the Endangered Species Network, representatives of Q's, Mark Ross, a man who has been recycling glass bottles collected at Old Pasadena bars, and Vera Rocha, chief of the Gabriellino Shoshone Nation.

It was at Rocha's insistence in 1991, around the time the Sage Council was formed, that the city changed the name to Hahamongna from Devil's Gate Dam. Yet, presently, no members of the tribe have been included in the decision-making process for the proposed park.

Racked with arthritis and now forced to use a wheelchair, Rocha exhibited some of the same fire of a few years back in her commitment to the environment and the preservation of that property, once a Shoshone settlement centuries ago.

"People have to change their habits. The habits of this life, this system, have never been so drastic," Rocha said.

"People have to take time on their own and look back at the past to realize what's happening in the present, to look forward to the future."

"People should have respect for wherever they walk. I don't care where it is."

The future for the Sage Council, which is currently embroiled in lawsuits involving the development of a new Catholic Cathedral in Downtown Los Angeles and the Endangered Species Act, among others, may soon be heading to court with Pasadena over the development of Hahamongna.

Klippstein said, "It still seems like it was a superficial kind of thing they did."

Klippstein said of the renaming of Devil's Gate to Hahamongna, "They keep calling it a park, but there is still no park plan. They have signs up, but it's not designated a park."

Klippstein said the site is right next to an EPA Superfund cleanup site, JPL, a fact that hasn't been given much attention by officials or the media.

"There are endangered ecosystems there, and there are endangered species there, and it's a Superfund site. Even if it is a park, why are they encouraging people to go to a place that's a Superfund site?" Klippstein asked. "Our guess is the way it's been handled for the past 10 years, it will probably end up in litigation."

Meanwhile, Francis said she's trying to stay focused on what's important about recognizing this year's Earth Day.

"If we can stay down to earth. You've heard that expression, down to earth?" she asked. "If we can get down to earth we will get closer to God, I think," she said.

# A watershed of information, ideas

\* Master planning committee moves forward with Hahamongna Park plans.

JUDY SICKLER  
Pasadena Weekly

**A**fter attending the second Hahamongna workshop meeting at the Pasadena City Yards Saturday, some community members left with a sense of accomplishment and a feeling their voices had been heard.

"We're closer to having an environmental impact study done, closer to having the project become a reality," said Camille Dudley, a resident of Altadena and longtime equestrian at Altadena Riders. "We're accomplishing what we originally set out to do when Tom Underbrink, principal water engineer for the city, initiated the park project."

But Leona Klippstein, conservation programs director of the Spirit of the Sage Council, still had her doubts.

Klippstein, who sent a representative to the workshop, expressed reservations stemming from the site's toxicity and clean-up efforts, hampered because of the discovery of perchlorate, a rocket fuel additive.

"It's not safe to have kids come play in a Superfund site," she said.

Klippstein also voiced concerns that parts of the watershed area found to be a Native American sacred burial grounds were being forgotten along with endangered species existing in the proposed parkland.

At the meeting, conservation and nature rehabilitation were the priority issues. Other topics, such as parking, the coexistence



MICHAEL GERMANA / PASADENA WEEKLY

Landscape architect Robert Takata and publicist Christie Balvin with maps of the Hahamongna Watershed Park.

of soccer fields, Frisbee golf courses and picnic areas were addressed, as well as the differentiation between bicycling, hiking and equestrian trails and the circulation of vehicle traffic.

Other issues also discussed were water conservation, flood control and recreation, circulation and access, habitat preservation and dam access.

Forty people toured the Hahamongna Watershed Park area in buses provided by the city and then returned to the City Yards on Mountain Street for the workshop held by the Hahamongna Advisory Committee and the Master Planning Committee. Bernadette Kornfeld, president of the Lincoln Howard Arroyo Freeway Association, said of her group, "There's a lot of consensus. Everybody agreed that the area should be a place to come in con-

tact with nature and listen to birds."

Provided with topographic maps showing an aerial view of the proposed site, attendees were given an opportunity to draw their own plans for the park and discuss them.

"They draw what they want to see," said public relations consultant Christie Balvin.

La Canada High School teacher and Pasadena resident Sally Fisher said her group was concerned with keeping the west side of the proposed site for recreation and the east side for the watershed. Fisher's group also proposed shared parking at JPL's lot should be moved to make more room for natural habitat and a larger water basin.

The next Hahamongna workshop is scheduled for June. For more information, call (626) 744-4321. ♦

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